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Library Newsletter

Billington Library

Summer 2006

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Recommended Citation

Billington Library, "Summer 2006" (2006). *Library Newsletter*. 11.
<http://scholarspace.jccc.edu/blnews/11>

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JCCC Billington Library

Summer 2006 Newsletter

What is a Digital Library?

by Jennifer Tate

At its simplest, a digital library is a traditional library made available online or on digital media such as CD-ROMs. However, most digital libraries focus on material less generally available than books, such as archival materials.

By making these materials available in a digital format they can be accessible to a much wider audience, particularly if they are made available online, without restrictions, so anyone with an Internet connection can access them.

Sometimes these digital projects are simply the digitized materials themselves.

For an example of this type of site, visit the Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive, found at <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/salem/>. Alternatively, the projects can include explanatory materials or lesson plans built using the materials found on the website. An example of this type of site is the Virtual Jamestown project, found at <http://www.virtualjamestown.org>.

In the spring of 2000, William Thomas, co-founder of the Virginia Center for Digital History (VCDH), first introduced me to the world of digital library development. As part of a course in Virginia history he taught at the University of Virginia, he brought us all to the Center's headquarters to show some of the projects under development. These projects ranged from digitized letters and memoirs of the Jamestown settlers to census records from the pre- and post-Civil War decades.

The field of digital library development is still a fairly new one. The oldest

digital centers in the United States are only around fourteen to fifteen years old. These centers are generally located at colleges and universities, with an interdisciplinary staff drawn from both the humanities and the computer

science fields. As a history major and a computer science minor, I found that my skill set allowed me to easily converse with professors from both disciplines. Digital library development is a unique situation in that it truly is an interdisciplinary field – specialists from many different departments are needed in order to create a genuinely useful website.

Perhaps this need for an interdisciplinary approach is why most digital project development is led by libraries and librarians.

In late July 2006, I began a new position at the Johnson County Community College Library as the Digital Librarian. As the Digital Librarian, I am responsible for the digitization of collections, many of which have yet to be identified, from many different programs represented at the college. One project already under development is the digitization of a World War II diary. This diary, which otherwise would have a very small audience, once digitized will reach a much wider audience, in addition to being used in a history course this fall.

My background led me directly into the field of digital library development. While at the University of Virginia for my undergraduate degree, I majored in History and minored in Computer Science. Despite the fact that I only minored in Computer Science, however, my career interest has always been in

Johnson County
Community College
Billington Library
12345 College Blvd.
Overland Park, KS 66210

Fall Semester Hours:

Mon-Thu	7:30 am - 10:00 pm
Friday	7:30 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday	8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sunday	1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Telephone:

Library Info	913-469-3871
Renew Book	913-469-4484

<http://library.jccc.edu>

the web development field. After taking Dr. Thomas's Virginia history class prior to graduating, I began working as a web developer at VCDH, one of the top digital library development centers on the East Coast.

After working at VCDH for three years, I decided to further my education by going to library school. I graduated from the University of Maryland's library science program in December 2005 with a dual focus in digital library development and archives. My husband and I moved out to Kansas in March as a result of his job being transferred.

I believe that the field of digital library development is one of tremendous growth right now. Creating digital libraries brings the world of the library into the lives of many more people than just the typical college library audience. A digital library can reach schoolchildren, high schoolers, college students, adults, and senior citizens. All that is required is an Internet connection. Studies have even shown that digital libraries can increase the exposure and use of their traditional counterparts. By beginning a digital library program at JCCC, the library is actively growing in an area that is becoming more and more popular in academia. ■

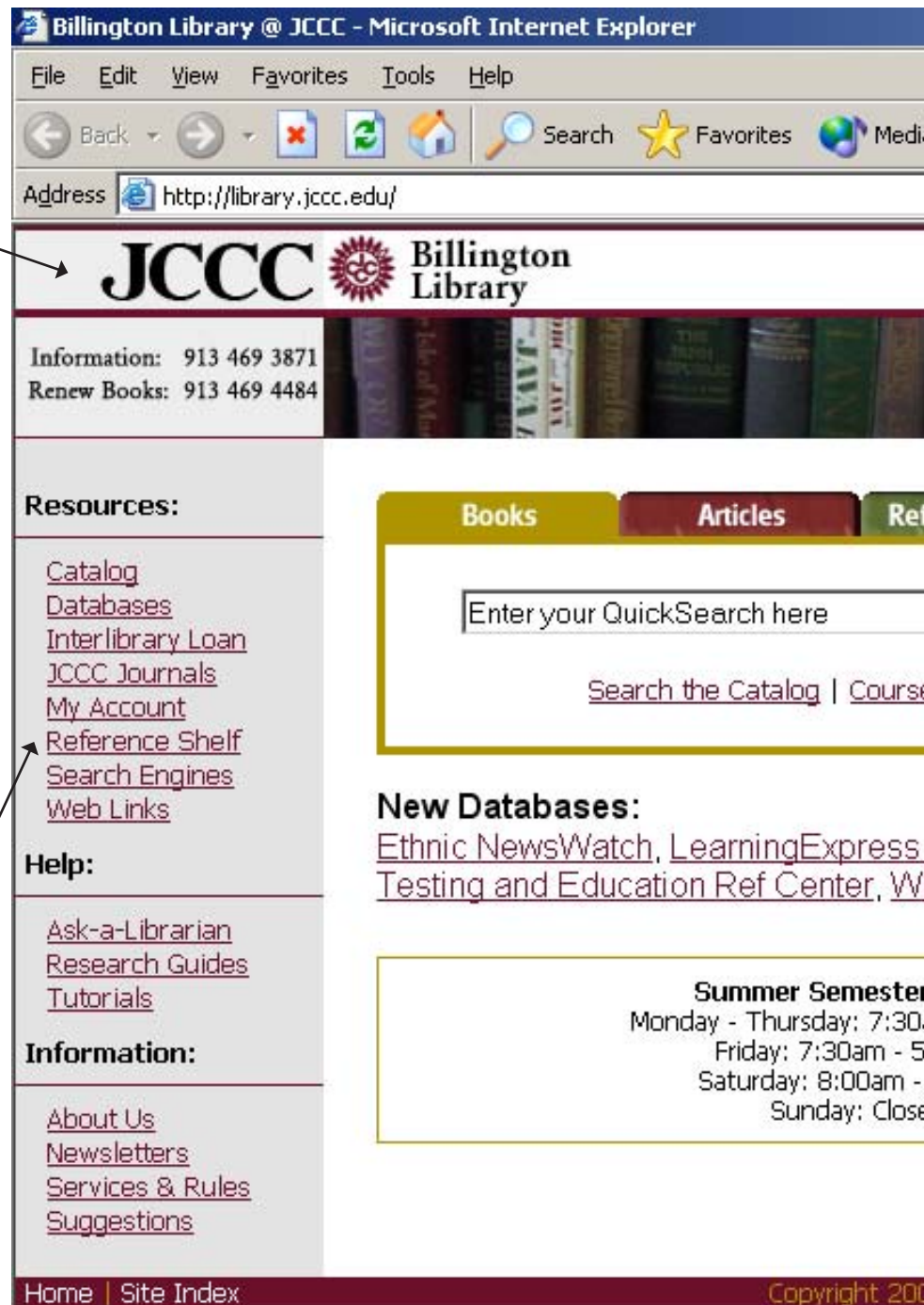


Home Sweet

Breaking down our

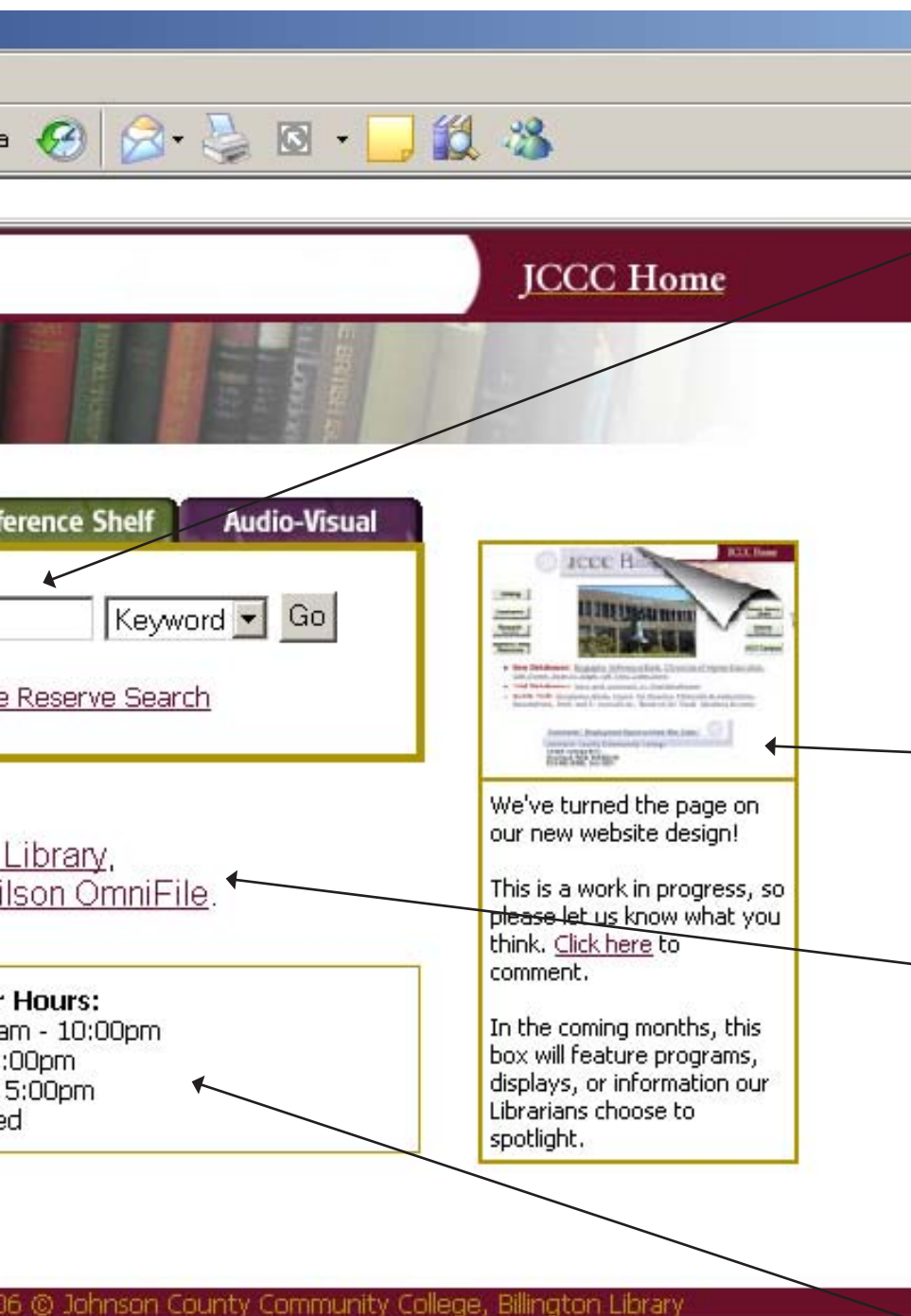
With millions of websites and hundreds of pages here at the college alone, placing our logo and name on the top left lets visitors know right away they've found the JCCC library website. The banner is carried throughout the site keeping visitors aware of their location. Location relative to the overall site is included just below the logo. Page titles have also been consistently formatted helping users know where they are within the site.

Placing the menu on the left hand side is becoming customary across the web. We divided ours into three basic categories and chose not to bury options in sub-menus; this design shows users the full set of options straight away. Like the banner, carrying the menu throughout the site reminds users of their options and gives them the ability to change direction without returning to the home page.



Online Home

our new homepage.



The library home page has always primarily served as a gateway to our resources. Adding a quick search box front and center greatly enhances access. The tab format was chosen for its visual style; tabs look nice, are flexible for the programmer, and the color coding easily focuses the eye on the resource area. Advanced users can follow the links within each tab to go from the quick search to the full set of search options in each area.

Extra screen space leaves room to highlight programs and new resources. The display box will feature a rotating set of programs, links, activities, and more that the librarians choose to spotlight each month. New databases and database trials change nearly as often as the librarians adjust resources to the ever changing curriculum.

The college and the library change hours between semesters, during the summer, and on holiday. Including the hours on the home page answers the most frequent question: are you open?

Have You Used Interlibrary Loan Lately?

If the library doesn't own the book you need, or have a copy of the article you're looking for, Interlibrary Loan is the service for you. Every year we borrow between 1300 and 1500 items for faculty, students, staff, and community members. We have approximately a 95% success rate in locating the material. As a rule the service is entirely free. The procedure is simple. On the library web page, click on the interlibrary loan link; select either the book or periodical request form; fill in the data; and send. Usually, the material you requested will arrive within seven to ten days. Copies of articles are yours to keep. Books and other material must be returned to the lending library by the due date that the owning library assigns.

There are a few caveats:

- o We will not borrow textbooks for students.
- o We cannot borrow material from other libraries and put it on reserve at Billington.
- o Copyright laws prevent us from requesting multiple articles in a single journal issue or several articles from the most recent five years of a publication.
- o If the only libraries that own the requested item charge fees, we will not borrow the item unless the requestor agrees to pay the fees.
- o Because we do not loan VHS and DVD materials, it is not easy for us to borrow them for people. However, we make every effort to locate libraries that will lend media. Usually we are successful.

In short, whether a student needs a piece of research to complete an assignment; a faculty or staff member is completing an advanced degree and needs many books or articles for the research; anyone is looking for recreational reading, viewing or listening that is not available in the library, Interlibrary Loan is available. If you have any questions, call Andrea Kempf at extension 3286. ■

This newsletter is published three times a year (spring, summer and fall semesters) at Johnson County Community College.

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Design: Stephanie Gerald
Web Editor: Stephanie Gerald

View past issues at:
<http://library.jccc.edu/newsletters/>

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The demand for wireless computing in the library continues to grow! Library laptops were checked out more than 1,800 times in Spring '06.

By Fall '06, it will be much easier to use personal laptops with the newly configured wireless network, which is part of the campus move toward a wireless environment. All library users will be able to use personally owned laptops with wireless capability to connect to library research resources and the Internet; students and staff will also be able to login for access to network resources such as printers and email.

Watch for this improvement and contact us with your questions and suggestions! ■